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ART. VI.—*Assyrian Texts Translated.* By H. F. TALBOT, Esq.

[Received 3rd October, 1859.]

In presenting the following translations to the Royal Asiatic Society, I hope to make a useful contribution to the study of Assyrian Antiquities. They have been prepared quite independently and without any communication with other enquirers. This has been done once before, under the auspices of the Society, in the case of the important inscription of Tiglath Pileser I., and I believe that the result has not been considered unsatisfactory by the Council of the Society and by the learned world in general. It is indeed a cogent argument, and persuasive to all candid minds, that when independent enquirers agree in the interpretation of writings of such extreme diversity and complexity, their opinions must rest upon a foundation of truth.

It is understood that Sir H. Rawlinson has prepared translations of the greater part of these documents. The comparison between the versions therefore cannot fail to be of utility.

The notes which I have added are brief, because to have given a full account of the various investigations, which have been found requisite, would have involved me in details too long for the present occasion. I hope, however, to elucidate some parts of the text more completely hereafter.

No. I.

INSCRIPTION FROM A BROKEN OBELISK OF ASHURAKHBAL,¹

Found at Kojunjik (Nineveh), but originally belonging to Kileh Shergat (Ashur), now in the British Museum.²

[This interesting inscription is in two columns, but the lower half of each is broken away.]

First Column.

The gods Ninev and Sidu, who upheld his footsteps, gave unto him (*the king*) a vast menagerie, or collection of animals. At one

¹ This king is called Sardanapalus by Sir H. Rawlinson.

² The Cuneiform text of this inscription will be found in plate 28 of the new volume published by the British Museum.

time he embarked in ships belonging to the city of Arvad, and he killed dolphins in the Great Sea (*the Mediterranean*).

At another time, many³ buffaloes, both young and vigorous, in the district of Araziki, which belongs to the land of Syria, and at the foot of Mount Lebanon he slew. (*A blank number of*) the young of these buffaloes he captured alive. All of them he kept in places well enclosed. (*a blank number of*) elephants with his arrows he slew, and (*a blank number of*) them he captured alive and brought them home to his city Ashur. 120 lions in the very same place in the ardour of the chase he slew in his open chariot and others on foot with his club or mace. And (*a blank number of*) lions he also slew with

At another time, through the thickest forests, the gods commanded him to make a chase after rare animals. In the short days of winter , and in the days of spring he went hunting. In the provinces of Ebitak, Urasha, Atzamiri, Anakna, Pizitta and Kasiyari, the cities of Assyria, Khanaraddi, Lulumi, and the mountains of Nahiri, he caught in hunter's toils (*a blank number of*) armi, turakhi, nali, and yaeli.

Every one of these animals he placed in separate enclosures, (*or in cages*). He brought up their young ones and counted them as carefully as young lambs. (*A blank number of*) nuri, midini, asi, malshirku, (*and several more kinds of rare animals*) he slew. But as to the creatures called burkish, utrati (*dromedaries*) tishani, and dagari, he wrote for them and they came. The dromedaries he kept in enclosures where he brought up their young ones. He entrusted each kind of animal to men of their own country to take care of them. (*There were also*) curious animals of the Great Sea (*the Mediterranean*) which the king of Egypt sent as a gift and entrusted to the care of men of his own land. The very choicest animals were there in great abundance, and birds of heaven with beautiful wings. It was a splendid menagerie, and all the work of his own hands.

The names of the animals were placed beside them.

* * * * *

Second Column.

Many portions of my majesty's palace which had decayed, I rebuilt from the foundation to the roof. The *black palace?* of Tsu-Yem and the great *colonnade?* which fronts the north? which Sardanakki king of Assyria built, was gone to decay, I rebuilt it.

³ The number of them is left blank.

The wall of my city of Ashur which had fallen down, and had crumbled into fragments I built up again, from the great gate of Erišlhu as far as the gate of the river Tigris. The beams of the great gate of Erišlhu, which were of cypress wood, I demolished and replaced them by most excellent beams of asukhi wood. And I fastened them with nails of copper. The great mound of the citadel in the city of Ashur I renewed in every part, and rebuilt it. The heaps of fallen fragments which lay around it, I took up and spread them on the mound. I built many palaces in my city of Ashur. Each was built of a different kind of wood. I erected against the walls four burkish and four lions of atmas stone, and two sacred bulls of paruti stone, and two burkish of pari stone and I set them up at the gates of the city.

The aqueduct which Ashurdanu king of Assyria built, the fountain which supplied that stream had been destroyed and during 30 years the waters, for that reason, came no longer. I restored the fountain of the stream and caused the waters to pass through it as before. And I planted trees by the side of it.

The *rampart*¹ of the gate of the river Tigris which Hu-zab-adan king of Assyria built, was gone to decay and had fallen in. Down to the waters of its fosse or ditch, I repaired it with bitumen and brick. The great colonnade of the new palace which fronts the which Kubar king of Assyria had built to the height of 63 , had gone to decay and had fallen down. I rebuilt it from its foundation to its roof.



Having thus given a general translation of the text, I will proceed to analyse the separate portions of it.

COLUMN I. .

The gods Ninev and Sidu(1), who upheld his (2) footsteps, gave unto him a vast menagerie (3).

(1) Ninev and Sidu were the deities who presided over hunting.

(2) Viz., those of the king, who here speaks in the 3rd person. These two deities are frequently called by the king, *rati ratti-ya*, "the upholders of my footsteps." In the present passage the text has, Ninev u Sidu sha rati-tzu iramu.

(3) *Buhur gazab*. This phrase, and *muhur gazab*, which occurs in l. 32, I consider to be the same. The excessive fondness of the Assyrian monarchs for hunting and for forming collections of curious animals is apparent from many of their inscriptions. *Buhur* might perhaps be translated "the hunting expedition," during which the animals were caught—but I prefer the first explanation.

He embarked (1) in ships belonging to the city of Arvad (2), and he killed dolphins in the Great Sea (3),

(1) *irkab*, from *rakab*, to ride—either in a chariot, thence itself named *rakab* רְקָבֶן in Hebrew—or in a ship—or in short in any *vehicle*.

(2) This is a most important passage. The event doubtless occurred during the great expedition of Ashurakhbal to Syria and the Phoenician coast which he has recounted at large in his annals. Upon that occasion the king embarked and “dipp'd his weapons in the Great Sea.” I am not sure whether this is to be taken literally.—That he dipped his arms in the waves of the Mediterranean, from veneration, because it was accounted a Holy Sea—or whether the weapons thus ‘dipped in the waves’ were not rather the harpoons and arrows which he shot at the monsters of the deep. The city of Arvad (Aradus of the classical authors, but the Arvad of Scripture) was at this period the most flourishing of Phoenician seaports, taking precedence even of Tyre and Sidon.

(3) *Nakhiri* as *yobba rebti iduk*. It appears from the inscriptions that the teeth of dolphins were especially valued as curiosities. In the long lists of presents and tribute offered to the Assyrian kings we frequently find mentioned, *Ka nakhiri binuta yobba*—“the teeth of dolphins, creatures of the Sea.” The grampus is probably meant, which is frequently found in the Mediterranean. Both these fish have sharp teeth and are very voracious. Whales have none.

It remains to enquire why these fish were called *Nakhiri*. The word meant properly “snorters” or “puffers,” from their habit of throwing up the salt water through their nostrils like a fountain. From *nakhar* to snort. Hebrew נַחֲרָה Syriac نَخْرَة And *nakhira* is the nostril in Syriac.

.... (1) buffaloes (2), young and vigorous (3), in the district of Araziki which belongs to the land of Syria (4), and at the foot of Mount Lebanon he slew. (*A blank number of*) the young (5) of those buffaloes he captured alive (6). *All?* of them (7) he kept in places well enclosed (8).

(1) It is very remarkable that a blank is left in the inscription for the number of buffaloes thus slain, as if the sculptor had not yet received any authorised statement respecting it. And so for most of the other animals, their numbers are left in blank.

(2) I find that this word was pronounced, at least in the plural, *rimu*. Probably the buffalo is meant, which is called רִמָּה in Hebrew, and רִימָה *rim* in the Book of Job, xxxix. 9 (see Gesenius, p. 915. I quote his valuable Lexicon from the Latin edition, Leipsic, 1833).

(3) *suturti*.

(4) Compare the inscription of Tiglath Pileser VI. 64. Where that monarch tells us in very similar language: “Four young buffaloes, large and vigorous, in the land of Mitani and in the district of Araziki which belongs to the land of Syria, he slew with his arrows, but their skins and horns he sent home to his city of Ashur.”

Such trophies doubtless formed a part of his *muhur* or museum.

(5) *miri*. (6) *bulthut wezabbit*. (7) *tzukullat*—every kind. (8) *yektsur*.

(*So many*) Elephants with his arrows he slew and (*so many*) he captured alive and brought them home to his city Ashur. 120 lions (1) in the very same place, in the ardor of the chase (2) he slew in his open chariot and others on foot with his *club* or *mace!* (3) And (*so many*) lions he slew with Also through the thickest forests (4), they [*the gods*] commanded him (5) to make a chase after rare animals (6).

(1) II susi urmakhi.

(2) as kitrup mitluti-su. This passage may be compared with Tiglath Pileser VI. 78, where we have *in yekrup* instead of *as kitrup*.—Open chariot, *pattut*, from פָתַח *patah* to open.

(3) paski.

(4) karshunu shakutu.

(5) yekbuni su.

(6) or to make a menagerie for them, epish buburisun.

In the short days of winter (1) and in the days of spring (2) he went hunting (3). In the provinces of Ebitak, Urasha, Atzamiri, Anakna, Pizitta and Kasiyari (4). The cities of Assyria, Khanaraddi (5), Lulumi and the mountains of (6) Nahiri, he (7) caught in (8) hunter's toils, (*so many*) armi, turakhi, nali and yaeli. Every one (9) of these animals he placed in separate enclosures (or in cages) (10). He brought up their young ones (11) and counted them (12) (*as carefully*) as young lambs (13). (*So many*) nuri, midini, asi, malshirku? (*and several more kinds of rare animals*) (14) he slew.

(1) Very doubtful.

(2) Ditto. Text has, "rising of the star"

(3) itsudu. This is precisely the Hebrew verb *tsud* to hunt, תְּסֻד

(4) The city of Kasiyari existed in the days of Tiglath Pileser I. who captured it.

(5) Called Khanirabbi in other inscriptions.

(6) The high mountainous region about the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates.

(7) wetimnikh. This verb is exactly the Hebrew *timik* תִּמֵּיק prehendit. See Gesenius, p. 1059.

(8) tsadirati, probably from *tsud*, to hunt.

(9) tzukullati sun. (10) yektsur.

(11) weshbalat marsit-tzun. Compare "mirani-sun ana mahatish weshalidi."

B. M. 44, 16.

(12) ennu. Compare Tiglath Pileser Inscription VII. 11. Minutzun kima sha marsit lu-tsieni malu annu. I counted the number (*malu*) of their young ones, as if they had been the young of sheep.

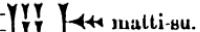
(13) kiina marsit lu-tzieni—"as the young of sheep."

(14) Their names are rather difficult to read with certainty, but three of them are likewise named *together* in the volume of inscriptions published by the British Museum, pl. 44, lines 18 and 19. I think therefore they may be depended upon as the correct names of the animals.

The wild beasts called here *nali*, *armi*, and *turakhi* are likewise named together in Tiglath Pileser VII. 5.

But as to the rare animals called *burkish*, *utrati* (dromedaries) *tishani*, and *dagari*, he wrote for them and they came (1). The dromedaries he kept in enclosures where he brought up their young ones. He entrusted (2) each kind (3) of animal to men of their own country (4) to take care of them.

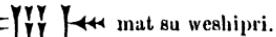
(1) *ishbur illikuni*. This apparently shows they were not natives of any part of the king's dominions accessible to his hunting expeditions. Perhaps translate "he commanded and they came."

(2) *weshipri*. (3) *tzukullati sun*. (4)  

[After a few words of which the sense is not clear, it continues.]

(1) Creatures of the Great Sea (*the Mediterranean*), which the king of Egypt sent as (2) a gift and entrusted to the care (3) of men of his own land (4).

(1) *huvami sha yobba rehti*. (2) *sar Mutsri weshabila*.

(3)  

(4) The rare animals are divided into three classes,—*first*, those which the king himself caught in his hunting expeditions; *secondly*, those which he sent for from the remoter parts of his dominions; and *thirdly*, those which he received as a gift from the king of Egypt.

The very choicest animals (1) in great abundance (2) and birds of heaven with beautiful wings—(It was) a splendid menagerie (3)—all the work of his own hands (4). The names of the animals were placed beside them (5).

(1) *sittit huvami*. (2) *mahadi*.

(3) or museum; for many of the animals had been killed and the collection contained only their skins and teeth. (See the inscription of Tiglath Pileser, where that monarch slays many great wild beasts and sends home to Ashur their skins and horns and teeth). We may therefore translate *mukur gazab*, "a splendid museum."

(4) *ebshait kati su*.

(5) *sunni sun itti huvami . . .* (the verb is lost by the fracture of the stone). This is really a most curious passage.

At this point the 1st column of this interesting inscription is unfortunately fractured. A small portion only of the succeeding lines is preserved, but they refer to another subject. The king relates how he visited different parts of his extensive dominions—both those which were friendly (1) and those which were hostile (2).

(1)   *rashi*, friends, from Chald. *rash* a friend  in Hebrew *yesh*

(2)   *enemies*.

And how he traversed the good or level (1) districts in his chariot and the hilly districts (2) on foot. Then, how he invaded the enemy's country and destroyed their army (3). Finally he describes the extent of the empire—of which only the words remain “from Babylon and Akkadi,” and a little further on, “the land of Akharri”—which was the province on the Mediterranean coast, often called in the inscriptions the land of Martu, but in after ages called Phoenicia.

(1) *kbiga.*(2) *martsa.*(3) *tapdasum ishkun.*

SECOND COLUMN.

This column enumerates the repairs which were made by order of Ashurakhbal to the numerous edifices erected by his ancestors, which from lapse of time had fallen to decay. And it seems that he names these kings in the order of time in which they reigned. If so, this is a valuable document. The order in which they stand is the following :—

Ashur-adan-akhi, or Sardanakki.

Ashurdanan.

Huzabadan.

Kubar.

The two last are his own father and grandfather, whose names occur in most of his inscriptions.

And Ashurdanan was his great-grandfather, as appears from the first sheet of the Annals. It is therefore probable that Sardanakki was the father of Ashurdanan. (*See Note at the end of the Paper.*)

Many portions (1) of my Majesty's palace which had (2) decayed, I rebuilt from the foundation to the roof. The Beth (3) Shakuri of Tsu-Yam (4) and the great *talia* (5) which fronts the *north*? (6) which Sardanakki? king of Assyria built, was gone to decay. I rebuilt it.

(1) These are enumerated,

(2) *shn enakhu.*

(3) Doubtless some large and important building, but the name is otherwise unknown to me. Perhaps however it means nothing more than the *black edifice*, that being the meaning of the adjective *shakur* in Hebrew שׁקָר.

(4) Apparently a private individual—perhaps some nobleman of the Court.

(5) Probably a arcade or colonnade, from Heb. לְלִפְתַּח textit: obumbravit: Ges. 390.

(6) *yem sidi*, one of the points of the compass—*north?*

The wall (1) of my city of Ashur (2) which had fallen down (3) and had crumbled (4) into fragments, (5) I built up again (6) from the great gate of *Erishlu?* as far as the gate of the river Tigris. (7)

The *beams?* of the great gate of *Erishlu?* which were of cypress (8) wood, I demolished (9) and replaced them by most excellent (10) beams of *asukhi* wood. And I fastened (11) them with nails of copper.

(1) Kharitsa.

(2) sha ir-ya Ashur-ki.

(3) sha huabtu.

(4) inlu. Passive from *malah* מְלָה lapsus est, evanuit (Gesenius, 577) *Malahim* are pieces, fragments (*Ges. ib.*)

(5) pishati (fragments), here, as elsewhere, expressed by a monogram



(6) akhruts.

(7) This passage shows that the city of Ashur was seated on the Tigris.

(8) *baratti*, from *barut* a cypress (*Ges. 173*). But perhaps it only means that they were *grown old*.

(9) wenikir.

(10) *tsirati*, (excellent).—The *asukhi* seems to have been a sacred tree. It was either the *Asoka* of India, now planted round temples, or else the sacred Sycamore of Egypt.

(11) werikits, from Hebrew סְכִיר rikis to fasten, often written *werakkits*.

The great mound of the citadel in the city of Ashur, I renewed in every part and rebuilt it. The heaps of fallen fragments which lay around it I took up and spread them on the mound.

The words of the text are “*Til raba sha ir-ya Ashur-ki ana sikharti-su asu kumutti, artzib.* *Shipik pishati ana limiti-su ana clinu ashbuk.*”

In this passage, *asu* signifies “I made,” from *asah* אָשַׁה to make.

kumutti, new: *ana sikharti-su*, in every part of it: *artzib*, I built it up. *Shipik*, a scattered heap, from Hebrew שָׁפָק shapak, sudit, effudit (*Ges. 1032*).

Ashbuk, I scattered or poured forth, from the same verb שָׁבַק or from the Arabic form of it *shabak* (see *Ges. 978*). This verb frequently occurs in the inscriptions with reference to fallen buildings and scattered ruins: e.g., *ishapik tilanish*, it was scattered in heaps.

Pishati, fragments: expressed by a monogram as before.

Ana limiti-su, all around it.

Ana clinu, upon the mound or elevation. This was probably done with a view to make the mound as high as possible before building the citadel on it.

I built many palaces in my city of Ashur: each was built of a different kind of wood. I erected (1) against the walls (2) four *burkish* (3) and four lions of *atmas* (4) stone and two sacred bulls of *paruti* stone, and two *burkish* of *pari* stone and I set them up at the gates of the city.

(1) *abnl.*

(2) *ana khiriti.* From Hebrew *kir* קִיר a wall; chiefly the wall of a city (Gesenius). And from thence any walled town was called *kirith* קִרְיָת (kirjath of our authorised translation). Also we have *kiria* קִרְיָה urbs, oppidum (Gesenius) from the same root.

(3) Some large animal. Its name has already occurred in Col. I.

(4) The name resembles the *adapeς* of the Greeks.

The aqueduct which Ashurdanan king of Assyria constructed (1), the fountain (2) which supplied that stream had been destroyed (3) and during 30 years the waters for that reason (4) came no longer. I restored the fountain of the stream and caused the waters to pass through it as before, (5) and I planted trees by the side of it.

(1) *akhru.*

(2) *rish,* Arabic *resh*, *head* of the stream: source of the water.

(3) *huabitu.*

(4) *as tsibbi sha,* because thereof. From Chaldee *tsibu* תְּסֻבָּה res, causa (Gesenius, 852).

(5) perhaps read, *ki* (or *kim*) *sha sanni makri*, "as in former years."

The *rampart?* of the great gate of the river Tigris, which Huzabadan king of Assyria had built, was gone to decay (1) and had perished (2). Down to the waters of its fosse or ditch (3) I repaired it with bitumen and brick. The great *colonnade?* (4) of the new (5) palace which fronts the which Kubar king of Assyria had built to the height of (6) sixty-three had gone to decay and had fallen down. I rebuilt (7) it from its foundation to its roof.

(1) *enakhu.* (2) *habbit.* (3) *nakbi sha.* (4) *talia raba.*

(5) *kumti.* (6) *ana siddi.* (7) *artzib.*

The remaining part of the column is fractured. From what remains we see that the king constructed many other large buildings (*beth galla*). One of them seems to be described as "both large and new" (*beth galla kumta*).

Additional Notes.

Additional Notes.—It is probable that the name of King Ashur-adan-akhi was pronounced in the reverse order, Ashur-akhi-adan, which is identical with the name of *Easarhaddon* as written by the Assyrians. The ancient monarch named in this inscription should therefore be called Esarhaddon I.

The word which I have transcribed as *gazab* in this memoir, is of very doubtful pronunciation : and as the same cuneiform sign expresses the syllable *zab* and *bir*, perhaps it would be better to transcribe it as *gabir*. It always signifies something *very great or powerful*, and *gabir* may easily be referred to either of the two Hebrew roots כָּבֵר or נָכְרָה which signify *fortis, magnus, longus, &c.*

I have translated *Beth shakuri*, “the black palace, or edifice,” supposing it to be the Hebrew שַׁחַר *black*. I have since remarked what I consider to be a great confirmation of this, viz., the mention made in the inscription of Tiglath Pileser (VIII, 1) of a certain ḥevidid edifice which is called *Beth Khamri*, “the Red house or temple,” viz., of the god Yem : *khamri* being the Hebrew and Arabic حَمْرَ “red,” fem. *khamra, hamra*.

The presents received from the king of Egypt (col. I. line 29) commence with the words *paguta rabta*, “great paguta,” which I am unable to translate. These *paguta* are frequently mentioned, and distinguished as “great” and “small.” The next present consisted of “Namsa-fish natives of the River,” viz., the Nile, which was called the River of Egypt. This I have likewise left untranslated, but I suspect them to have been crocodiles. The crocodile was called by the Egyptians χαρψα according to Herodotus, but I think the plural of this word may have sounded *namsa*, because the plural of Egyptian words was often formed by prefixing the syllable *ni*, according to Champollion’s Egyptian Grammar.